

Abstract 579

TITLE: Re-engineering the HIV prevention System through Linkage, Coordination, and Capacity Building to Enhance Services for Women

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ISSUE: Increasingly women, especially young women, are being impacted by HIV/AIDS. By 2010, it is estimated that women will comprise about HALF of the U.S. HIV epidemic. The complex social and behavioral needs of women have not been incorporated into the capacity of current public health systems and biomedical analyses. Since a number of complex sociological factors contribute to this growing epidemic among women, these factors present expanded HIV prevention opportunities beyond current health systems.

SETTING: Primary HIV Prevention/Education for Women

PROJECT: Based on the review of current HIV prevention projects across the various agencies of the Department of Health and Human Services, the Primary Prevention/Education Work Group of the Collaborative Group on Women and HIV/AIDS (co-sponsored by the PHS Office on Women's Health and Office of HIV/AIDS Policy) developed a novel taxonomy. This categorizes the HIV prevention services addressing primary HIV prevention needs for women. Because substance abuse, mental health, violence, and other competing health and social needs may be present along with HIV, the taxonomy may be used to assess the ability of current systems to meet these needs.

RESULTS: The taxonomy assesses many factors including: environmental impact, linkage and collaboration with other health and human service agencies (mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, housing, job training, criminal justice, etc.), transmission variables and behavioral theory and interventions. The Primary Prevention Work Group has categorized existing programs and services according to the taxonomy, as well as provided women with guidance as to what services they can expect to request and receive from their providers and prevention programs.

LESSONS LEARNED: A system analysis of current HIV prevention delivery systems has failed to incorporate the complex social services needs of women which contribute to HIV transmission. The new taxonomy develops a lexicon and system for incorporating essential linkages between social service needs of women, and current prevention systems. A re-engineered women-specific prevention system will allow flexibility in providing a customized set of services for each female client to meet the variable and complex needs of those most at risk for HIV.

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